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S H O C H I K U

NEO-KABUKI PLAY

"SHUZENJI MONOGATARI"

(Story of the Shuzenji Temple)

One Act --- Three Scenes

Written by Kidoh Ukenoto

(For Travelling Troupe)

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C.C.D. J-2083



Suppressed
Vol. 1 page
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Synopsis:

Once there was a mask-maker named Yashaoh who had gained fame throughout the length and breadth of Japan owing to his superior skill, but resided in an out-of-the-way village of Izu Province. In the meantime, Yoriie Minamoto, the then Shogun, who had been staying in the village, had ordered Yashaoh to make a mask modeled after his portrait. However, Yashaoh postponed presentation of the ordered mask to Yoriie on some pretext or other. Therefore one day Yoriie called on the mask-maker himself so as to press the latter for the mask ordered and took the mask which, the maker said, had not been made to his liking. Besides Yoriie was charmed with Yashaoh's eldest daughter Katsura because of her good features and took her away to his temporary residence, for he knew that she had also loved him from the bottom of her heart.

As ill luck would have it, however, that night Yoriie's chief retainer Yoshitoki Hohjoh rose in revolt against Yoriie and dispatched a rebel army to the latter's abode for the purpose of killing his master. When the rebels surrounded the residence, Yoriie was taking a bath. Katsura loved Yoriie so much that she determined to save his life and wore the mask made by her father so as to mislead the enemy. Cutting her way through the enemy, after all she returned to her father's house though she was seriously wounded, but to her great disappointment she was told that her lover Yoriie had already been assassinated. Meanwhile, Yashaoh knew the reason why the mask made by him had had the appearance of approaching death and regained confidence in himself.

CHARACTERS:

Mask-Maker Yashaoh

Yashaoh's Eldest Daughter Fatsura

Yashaoh's Second Daughter Kaede

Kaede's Husband Haruhiko

Yorie Kingo Genza

Kageyasu Coroh Shimoda

Yukichika Myohe Kanakubo

Priest of the Shuzenji Temple

Yukichika's Followers

THE FIRST SCENE

The stage represents Yashach's house close by the River Katsura, Shuzenji Village (now Shuzenji), Karino, Izu Province; it is an old straw-thatched cottage. On the walls of the house hangs masks used for dancing. In front there is an entrance covered with a dark-blue shop-curtain. On the left there is a fire-place over which hangs an earthen teapot. At the entrance of the garden there is a gate made out of bamboos. Outside of the house there stands a large willow. Behind the willow are to be seen mountains or hills beyond the field. It is July 18th of the first year of Genkyu.

On the right of the house there is the workshop covered with bamboo-blinds on three sides. In the garden there is a hedge of autumnal flowers now in full bloom. Beside the hedge there are seated Yashach's eldest daughter Katsura, aged 20 and his second daughter Kaede, aged 18, making fulling-blocks by striking.

Katsura (after a while stops striking): Since I've kept on striking about an hour, my shoulders and arms are asleep, you know. Let's stop striking, shall we?

Kaede: But up to yesterday we had enjoyed the "Bon" holidays, so we ought to work hard from today on, I should think.

Katsura: If you would like to work, you'd better do so by yourself. If so, you would be praised by father and Haruhiko Dono, I guess. As for me, I'm sick of working now. (throws away fulling-blocks)

Kaede: I wonder why you say such a thing. We must make our living by working hard, for we are very poor, you know.

Katsura (smiles mockingly): I tell you ~~xx~~ I've taken no interest in such a work. If father reside in Kamakura, we should have no such trouble, I should say. Because of his bigoted idea as an artisan, we must live in such out-of-the way place of Izu. I'm not willing to live here to the end of my life. For instance, this fancy paper cannot be sold well at such a village, but it may be bought by nobles in large cities.

The same thing can be said of women. Even if we are of humble birth, we might be able to take service with a minister of state or the Shohgun. Therefore it's no wonder that I should get tired of this work, you see.

Kaede: Don't say such a thing. We should be contented with our lot. It's absurd that you should dream of taking service with the Shohgun.

Katsura: My way of thinking is entirely different from yours, you know. Though you are my younger sister and only eighteen years old, you've already married a man named Haruhiko. As for me, I'm twenty now, but I've not yet married, for I don't want to live in such a lonely place throughout my life. I don't think you understand my state of mind, for you're

satisfied with being such a workman's wife.

(declares with nonchalance. Just then Kaede's husband Haruhiko, aged 20, comes out of the inner room.)

Haruhiko: Katsura Jono, it seems to me that you look down upon workmen. However, among various kinds of workmen a maker of masks ranks first, I should think.

In all Japanese history Royal Prince Shohtoku was the first to make a mask for dancing, followed by Prince Tankai, Bishop Kohboh and Murabe No Kasuga, a courtier. Following in their footsteps, we are masks for dancing, you know.

Katsura: I admit Royal Prince Shohtoku and Prince Tankai were peers, but I don't regard making masks as a noble work. Moreover, I don't think those nobles made for their living.

Haruhiko: I wonder why you consider this work for our livelihood to be a mean one. Even if I make a finest mask and am called a master of making masks, would you despise me as a workman?

Katsura: Oh, a workman is a workman all the same however he may be a capital hand at the work. Workmen cannot expect to become courtiers or warriors.

Haruhiko: Do you mean to say that courtiers or warriors are noble while workmen are low-born?

Katsura: Sure. Don't be so inquisitive.

(looks aside and pays no attention to Haruhiko, who gets angry and draws closer to her. Thereupon Kaede keeps him from doing so in a flurry.)

Kaede: Please don't quarrel. As you know, my sister is obstinate by nature.

Haruhiko: I know her character, so I've controlled my anger up to now, but she has gone to extremes, I think. I've respected her, for she is my elder sister-in-law. But she often slights me and makes me feel unpleasant, so if she despises me any more, I'll not call her elder sister from now on.

Katsura: Oh, never mind. It's by no means a thing to be proud of that I've such a workman as my brother-in-law.

Haruhiko: Hang it! (draws near Katsura again when Kaede checks him with an uneasy look. Just at the moment from within the bamboo-blinds is heard Yashaoh's voice.)

Yashaoh: Don't quarrel. Be quiet.

(hearing Yashaoh's voice, Haruhiko keeps silent.

Meanwhile, Kaede rises to her feet and draws up the blinds when Yashaoh is seen in the workshop carving a mask with a chisel and a wooden hammer in his hands; he is over fifty and wears a ceremonial head-gear and clothes. Beside his knees scatter chips of wood.)

Haruhiko: I'm sorry to have interrupted your work by quarreling over trifling matters, please excuse me.

Kaede: The bone of contention is that I've given a piece of advice to elder sister. I hope you'll scold her and Haruhiko Dono.

Yashaoh: Oh, how shall I scold them? I'll not scold them. By the way, it's getting dark. I feel chilly in the evening, for autumn has already come. You might go to the inner room and get ready for dinner and lights.

Katsura and Kaede: Certainly. (stand up and go to the inner room)

Yashach: Hey, Haruhiko. Since Katsura is very proud of herself, you may feel very displeased. But I hope you'll pardon her for her rudeness. I tell you my wife had once been in the service of ~~k~~ a courtier and married me. She was haughty and often regretted of having married me till she breathed her last. She gave birth to two girls, that is, Katsura and Kaede. Katsura resembles her by nature while Kaede looks like me. I remember I often quarreled with her about trifles. Ha, ha, ha!

Haruhiko: Now I understand why Katsura Dono despises workmen and wishes to marry a courtier or a warrior, for ~~she~~ has the same character as mother's.

Yashach: That's why I hope ~~xxx~~ you'll not get angry with her whatever she may say.

(Just at the moment the bell indicating the evening rings. From the inner room comes out Kaede carrying a candlestick in her hand.)

Haruhiko: Oh, now I remember. Well, I shall have to go to the town of Ohji and receive the chisel and knife which I ordered at the shop the other day.

Kaede: It's dark now, so you'd better go there tomorrow.

Haruhiko: Oh, no, they are important tools for me, so I shall have to get them as soon as possible.

Yashaoh: Well said! A workman should care for his tools.

Go right away before it gets very dark.

Haruhiko: Though it's evening now, I shall go along the frequented road, so I shall soon be back. (goes out. At the gate Maede sees him off. After a while with a priest of the Shuzenji Temple carrying a lighted paper lantern in his hand at the head Lord Minamoto-No-Yoriie, aged 23, comes out, followed by Goroh Shimoda, aged 17-18, with Yoriie's long sword high in his hands.)

Priest: Hey, hey, the Shogun has come here incognito, so you must try not to be rude to him.

(Hearing the priest's words, Maede falls prostrate.

Yoriie and Goroh come forward when Yashaoh also comes out and welcomes them.)

Yashaoh: I've not expected your coming, so I'm afraid I shan't be able to treat you well, but please come this way. (Yoriie takes a seat on the verandah.)

Yashaoh: And what do you want with me?

Yoriie: Oh, you should know what I want with you. Tell me the reason why you've not yet made the mask though I ordered you to make it a long time ago, giving you my picture.

Goroh: Since it's only a mask, I don't think it takes you more than a hundred days to make the mask however it may be an elaborate carving.

Over half a year has already passed since you were ~~ordered~~ ordered to make it, but you've not offered it to the Lord yet. Therefore my Lord is very much angry with you.

Yoriie: I'm short-tempered, so I've lost my temper and come here myself without sending a messenger. Tell me the reason why you've been negligent in your duty.

Yashaoh: I'm sorry you've become angry with me. How shall I be able to neglect my work of carving the Shohgun's face? It's a great honour to do so. Although half a year has already passed since I was ordered, I've not yet been able to make a mask to my liking in spite of my efforts from morning till night, so I've been obliged to prolong the day for offering the mask to you against my will.

Yoriie: Oh, you repeat the same excuse whenever I press you for the mask. I'm sick of your pretext.

Goroh: Now you shall not put it off to make up the mask without fixing the date for its completion and apologizing for yourself.

Yashaoh: I'm sorry to say I shan't be able to tell you the date. I tell you that a maker of masks is different from a carpenter. Though I devote myself to my work of making masks, I cannot expect to make even a mask without being inspired. I don't know when I shall be able to do so myself.

Priest: Here, here, Yashaoh Dono, if you make such an evasive reply, I'm afraid you'll make the Lord more displeased. Therefore you ought to make a definite answer by fixing the date for its completion.

Yashaoh: But I shan't be able to make the mask so soon, you know.

Priest: I'm sure you would be able to do so, for you are expert at making masks and your name is widely known even to people of Kyoto and Kamakura.

Yashaoh: That's why I cannot make any mask without being inspired. However I may be punished, I shall be unwilling to leave my workmanship in the world against my will.

Yoriie: Don't say such a cheeky thing. Do you mean to say that you'll be unable to make the mask at any cost?

Yashaoh: Oh, yes.

Yoriieh: Hum! You'll smart for it. (gets angry and, snatching the sword from Goroh's hand, is about to draw it. Just then Katsura rushes out of the inner room.)

Katsura: Please wait a moment!

Yoriie: Oh, get out of my way.

Katsura: Be quiet, please. Now we shall offer you the mask. What do you say, Father?
(However, Yashaoh doesn't reply to her.)

Goroh: Why, is the mask made already?

Yoriie: Don't tell a lie by making such an inconsistent remark.

Katsura: Oh, I'm not telling you a lie. The mask has been made already. Say, Father, there is no help for it, I should think.

Kaede: Exactly so. You'd better offer the mask made yesterday to the Lord.

Priest: Very good. You'd better do so and ask the Lord to excuse you if you have already made the mask. You care for life better than your reputation, I suppose.

Yashaoh: Oh, it's no concern of yours. Hold your tongue!

Priest: But there is no other way, I should say.

Now, young lady, you'd better bring the mask and show it to the Lord anyway. Be quick!

Kaede: Very well. (rushes into the workshop and comes out again with a case of the mask and hands it to Katsura. Receiving it, Katsura offers it before Yorie, who looks at her in silence and seems to have softened his anger.)

Katsura: Please look at this. I've told you the truth, haven't I?

(Thereupon Yorie takes up the mask and looking closely at it unconsciously exclaims at its beauty.)

Yorie: Oh, well done! Excellent!

Coroh: My Lord, it's exactly like you.

Yorie: Indeed! (still looks at the mask closely)

Priest: Yashaoh Dono, I hardly understand why you've hesitated to offer such an excellent mask to the Lord.

Yashaoh (with a certain solemnity of manner): Since it's a workmanship against my will, I've not wanted to show it to others. But it cannot be helped now. How do you find the mask?

Yorie: You're really worthy of your reputation. I'm quite satisfied with this mask.

Yashaoh: Oh, I'm afraid you've made a mistake in your estimate of this mask. It's the poorest work of mine, I should say. Please look at it closely, and you'll see the mask is dead.

Goroh: What do you mean by saying that "the mask is dead?"

Yashaoh: Up to now I've been proud of my skill, for all my masks have been said to be true to life. However, this mask indicates a dead man's face although I've made it over and over again.

Goroh: You may think so, but in my eyes it's a living man's face but not a dead man's.

Yashaoh: Oh, you are wrong. In all appearance it's not a living man's face, but a dead man's with resentful eyes.

Priest: Hey, don't say such an ominous thing. Now that the Lord is satisfied with the mask, you'd better express your thanks.

Yoriie: Anyway, I'm pleased with this mask, I'll take it home with me.

Yashaoh: If you want it so much, ---.

Yoriie: Oh, I do want it. ~~Now~~ Now. (makes a sign with his chin when Katsura replaces the mask in the case and offers it to Yoriie in a somewhat coquettish manner. Yoriie looks closely at Katsura.)

Yoriie (to Yashaoh): I've one more thing to ask of you.
I should like to employ this daughter of yours.
Have you any objection to it?

Yashaoh: Well, I'm afraid I shan't be able to answer to you offhand without knowing her mind.
(Katsura boldly comes forward.)

Katsura: Father, allow me to be in his service.

Yoriie: Bravo! Do you want to be in my service?

Katsura: Yes.

Yoriie: Then you'd better carry the mask in your hands and accompany me.

Katsura: Certainly.

(Yoriie rises to his feet, followed by Goroh and Katsura. Just then Kaede pulls her elder sister Katsura by the sleeve and whispers.)

Kaede: Sister, are you really going to be in his service?

Katsura: Yes, what you called a dreamy desire just now has been realized after all.

(looks back at Kaede proudly and goes down to the garden)

Priest: Now I'm relieved. Yashaoh Dono, I shall see you again tomorrow.

(Yoriie is about to go when he trips on a stone. In next to no time Katsura gets near him and holds him by the hand.)

Yoriie: Oh, now it has become very dark.

(The priest steps forward and hands the lighted paper lantern to Katsura. Katsura hands the case of the mask to the priest and goes out holding the paper lantern in one hand and Yoriie's hand in the other. Meanwhile, Yashaoh seems to be lost in thought.)

Kaede: Father, you might see them off.

(Hearing Kaede's words, yashaoh comes to himself and goes out to the gate so as to see them off with Kaede.)

Goroh: I assure you that you will be given some prize some day.

(Thereupon Yoriie and the others leave one after another. Meanwhile, Yashaoh gets up and after keeping silent for a while walks directly to the verandah and goes to the workshop where he brings the hammer and putting down the masks from the walls in about to crush them with it. Seeing it, Kaede gets surprised and clings to him.)

Kaede: Ah, what are you going to do? Have you become crazy?

Yashaoh: I regret that I offered the mask to the Shohgun. Since it's my poorest workmanship, it will be a great discredit to me if it's handed down to his successors as an heirloom. Anyway I cannot enjoy my reputation any longer, so I'll never engage in my work from now on.

Kaede: If you really think so, I hope you'll work harder and make excellent masks so as to clear your honour. (clings to Yashaoh and weeps. However, Yashaoh does not reply to her and closes his eyes as if he were deep in thought. It gets very dark. At a distance the notes of a flute come within hearing.

----- Dark Change -----

THE SECOND SCENE

The stage represents the River Katsura and its vicinity. There is a bridge over the river. On the banks of the river there stand several willows and grow a lot of reeds and pampas grasses. The gate of the Shuzenji Temple is seen.

It's night of the same day. Goroh Yamada carrying Yorie's sword high with his hand and the priest holding the case of the mask under his arm come out.

Goroh: The Lord wanted to take a stroll along the riverside with Katsura Dono and asked us to precede them. However, the Shuzenji Temple assigned for his temporary abode is already within a stone's throw. Shall we stand at the foot of this bridge and wait for them?

Priest: Oh, no, we'd better not do so. Now that he is infatuated with the beautiful girl named Katsura Dono, I'm afraid we shall displease him if we interrupt his love affairs. (However, Goroh still stands with an uneasy look.)

Priest: Especially I'm in charge of bath, so I shall have to go back to the temple quickly and get ready for it.

Goroh: Oh, you needn't get ready for bath so hurriedly, for hot water wells from the hot-spring.

Priest: Well, it's inelegant of you to say such a thing though you're a young man. Such a warrior and a priest as us will be burdens to the young lovers, I should say. Ha, ha, ha! Let's go.

(pulls forcibly Goroh by the sleeve. Thereupon Goroh unwillingly crosses the bridge with the priest. The moon starts shining. After a while Katsura and Yoriie come out; Katsura holds the paper lantern in one hand and Yoriie's hand in the other.)

Yoriie: Oh, what a beautiful moon! The autumn in such an out-of-the-way place is exceedingly nice and poetical.

Katsura: As for me, I'm quite used to such a lonely place. But I think you feel very lonesome here far away from Kamakura.

(Yoriie takes a seat on a large stone near-by while Katsura stands leaning against the railings of the bridge with the paper lantern in her hand. The moon shines. Chirps of insects are heard.)

Yoriie: Though Kamakura is superficially a beautiful city, it's by no means a good place to live in. It's a hotbed of crimes, I should say. (looks up at the moon)

Katsura: I'm only too glad to be in your service. How happy I am to be employed by the Shogun! I remember this March I've seen you for the first time on this riverbank.

Yoriie: Oh, you said then that your name is Katsura, the same name as this river.

Katsura: I also said that there are two "Katsura" (Japanese Judas trees) in this cave and at the roots of the trees gushes out fresh water which flows into the river. That's why the river has the name of Katsura and the trees have been called the trees of a married couple from the olden times. So I replied to your question. Do you remember what you said to me in this connection?

Yoriie: Yes, I do. I said in joke, "Even trees should marry, so human beings ought to marry by all means."

Katsura: Though you might have said in joke, I was beside myself with joy and have paid a visit to this cave for a hundred days with the hope of seeing you again. Now I'm very happy to be in your service from today on.

Yoriie: Are you so much happy to be in my service though I'm a very unfortunate man? As you probably know, I had a mistress named Wakasa, daughter of the magistrate of Mie Province named Nobukazu, but she died unhappily when her father was defeated in battle. From now on you shall be my second mistress, so you'd better call yourself Wakasa hereafter.

Katsura: Then do you mean to say that I shall become Lady Wakasa from now on? I appreciate your kindness.

Yoriie: Though I had once a disappointment in love, now I'm glad to say that I've won your heart. Therefore I should like to spend my whole life in this quiet place, casting away other worldly passions. Should anything happen to my like, however, you'd better regard this mask made by your father as my keepsake. I tell you my uncle Gama Dono was sentenced to death here in this Shuzenji, so I might have the same fate as his.

(The moon goes behind the clouds. Just then two armed ~~sold~~ soldiers stealthily come out and hide themselves in the bushes of reeds. In next to no time chirps of insects suddenly stop.)

Katsura: I wonder why insects have suddenly stopped chirping.

Yoriie: Be careful! Some people must have come here.

(Just at the moment a warrior, aged about 30, named Yukichika Hyohe Kanakubo comes out.)

Yukichika: My Lord, are you living near here?

Yoriie: Who are you?

(Katsura holds up the paper lantern when. Yoriie notices Yukichika.)

Yukichika: I'm Yukichika Kanakubo.

Yoriie: Oh, you are Hyohe. What have you come here from Kamakura for?

Yukiie: As a messenger of Mr. Hohjoh.

Yoriie: Hohjoh's messenger? Then you are going to assassinate me, I suppose.

Yukichika: Oh, no, I've no such terrible plot in mind, but I've only come here to inquire after your health.

Yoriie: Don't make an excuse, Hyohe. Since you are armed all over, I'm sure you are going to attack me unawares.

Yukichika: Though I'm armed to the teeth, I've no such terrible plot against you. Peace is restored after the war, but a great many remnants of the Heike Clan are still at large and besides highwaymen roam about in the mountain paths westward from Hakone, so I'm told. That's why I'm armed, you know.

Yoriie: Say what you may, I don't want to hear any message of the hateful Hohjoh from you. Get away, get away! (However, Yukichika calmly turns round and looks at Katsura.)

Yukiie: What's this woman?

Yoriie: She is my waiting-maid.

Yukiie: Now that you are placed in domiciliary confinement, you ought not to employ such a low-born woman as her, I should say.

(Thereupon Katsura loses her head and comes forward.)

Katsura: Say, Hyohe Dono, are you a fortune-teller or a physiognomist? Don't call me a low-born woman at first glance.

As for me, I was born in the City of Kyoto and my mother had once served nobles.

Besides now I've become the Shogun's waiting-maid and I'm entitled to call myself Lady Wakasa. It's unlike a Kamakura warrior such as you to say a lot of rude things against me without greeting me. Indeed you are a rude guy! (smiles coldly at Yukichika, who knits his brows)

Yukichika: Lady Wakasa, eh?

Who has given you the title?

Yoriie: Oh, I've granted the title to her.

Yukichika: Without consulting with Mr. Hohjoh about it?

Yoriie: Why should I consult with people of Hohjoh?

Tokimasa and Yoshitoki are my retainers, you know.

Yukichika: What about your mother?

Yoriie: Shut up! I don't want to listen to you. Get away!

Yukichika: Then I shan't be able to talk with you any more, so I shall call on you again tomorrow morning and tell you in detail about it.

Yoriie: Oh, you mustn't call on me again. Wakasa, come on.

(Yoriie rises to his feet and holds Katsura's hand. After that, both of them cross the bridge together and leave.

Meanwhile, Yukichika sees them off. Just then the soldiers who have been hiding themselves among the bushes come out.)

Soldier A: We've long been waiting for your signal,
but you've made no sign to us.

Soldier B: Therefore we've idled away ~~at~~ our time without
attacking him.

Yukichika: Sorry to say the Lord has been on the alert, so
we've lost the chance of attacking him. Since Mr.
Hohjoh has ordered us to assassinate us, however,
we shall have to make a raid on the Chuzenji Temple
in numbers and fulfil our mission. I tell you the
Lord is good at the art of self-defence and besides
there are some who are good at fencing among
his pages. Even if they are small in ~~a~~ numbers, you
mustn't make light of them, but try not to be defeated by
them. Be careful not to fight among yourselves
since you have to fight with them in the night.

Soldiers: Certainly.

Yukichika: I ask one of you to go to the lower reaches of the river
and tell men at the entrance of the village to
attack the temple right away.

Soldier A: Very well.

(One of them leave for the left. Taking the other
with him, Yukichika leaves for the right. From behind
the tree comes out ~~Kan~~ Haruhiko stealthily.)

Haruhiko: From my way home from the town of Ohni, I've seen several
armed soldiers here and there examining passers-by.
Now I understand they are going to kill the Lord according
to the directive of Mr. Hohjoh. It's indeed a serious
matter.

(At a distance flapping of birds' wings are heard.

Crossing the bridge, Goroh Shimoda comes out.)

Goroh: This village is usually very lonesome, but this evening it seems very noisy as if anything serious would happen. Now I'll go round the upper and lower reaches of the river to make it sure.

Haruhiko: You are Goroh Sono, aren't you?

Goroh: Oh, you're Haruhiko.

(Haruhiko gets near Goroh and whispers something in the latter's ear.)

Goroh: What did you say? Is it true that Kanakubo has come here to shorten the Lord's life?

(Goroh gets confused and is about to retrace his steps when a soldier carrying a spear in his hand comes out across the bridge and strikes at Goroh in silence. Goroh draws his sword and takes no time in putting the soldier to the sword. Just then several soldiers come out from both sides of the stage and surround Goroh.)

Goroh: Hey, Haruhiko, I shall keep these guys from going here, so I ask you to rush to the Temple so as to report the Lord of the fact.

Haruhiko: Very well.

(Haruhiko crosses the bridge and runs off. Meanwhile, Goroh fights with the enemy bravely.)

----- Dark Change -----

THE THIRD SCENE

Same as the First Scene

Yashaoh stands at the gate of his house looking far away. The emergency bell of the Shuzenji Temple comes within hearing. Just then Kaede rushes out.

Kaede: A night attack has been made, Father.

Yashaoh: Oh, Kaede, have you ascertained it?

Kaede: The enemy force seems to consist of about two to three hundred men and they have made a raid on the Shuzenji Temple.

Yashaoh: I've heard noises of men and horses suddenly, so I've wondered what might have happened. Then they must have made a raid on the Shuzenji Temple. They may be the remnants of the Heike Clan or the rebels from Kamakura. Anyway it's a serious event.

Kaede: Sorry to say Maruhiko Hono has not come back yet. What shall we do?

Yashaoh: Oh, it's of no use for us to worry about it. We'd better let things take their course. At worst we should leave this place together. It has nothing to do with us whether the Heike Clan or the Genji Clan or the Hohenji Clan will prosper.

Kaede: However, what would you do if my elder sister might fail in running out of the Temple?

Yashaoh: I'm afraid we should be unable to rescue her even if anything might happen to her. I'm sure she is ready for the worst.

The bell of the temple rings and mingles with the sounds of drums. Kaede stands up and goes toward the gate repeatedly; she seems to be in anguish. Just then Haruhiko comes out over there.)

Kaede: Oh, haruhiko Dono, I've long been waiting for your return.

Haruhiko: As a matter of fact, I happened to overhear what warriors of the Hohjoh Clan talked about tonight's raid behind a tree, so I wanted to report the Lord of it and ran to the Shuzenji Temple. However, all the gates of the temple had already been surrounded by the enemy and I could not accomplish my mission to my great regret.

Kaede: Then don't you know about my sister's safety?

Haruhiko: No, and I don't know about the Lord's ~~xx~~ safety, either. Now his pages though small in numbers are fighting bravely with the enemy force.

Yashao: Anyway the enemy are superior in numbers, so I'm afraid the Lord's life is in danger and will share the same fate with his dead uncle Gama Dono. It seems to me that the graves of the Shuzenji Temple are doomed to be filled with the bodies of the Genji Clan.

(Just at the moment the bell of the temple rings violently. Haruhiko and Kaede again look outside.)

Kaede: Oh, footsteps of numbers of people and sounds of fighting with swords are heard.

Haruhiko: The sounds are getting nearer and nearer, I think.
(Just then Katsura, carrying the mask in one hand and a halberd in the ~~in~~ other, rushes out: she seems to be wounded and falls down at the gate.)

Haruhiko: My goodness! Some one is at the gate, I should think.

(Haruhiko and Kaede run up to Katsura and help her to her feet: they take her to the garden where she again falls.)

Haruhiko: Say, you're not seriously wounded. Take ~~some~~ courage!

Katsura (seems to be out of breath): Oh, Kaede and Haruhiko
Sono, where is father?

Yashaoh: What?

(Yashaoh approaches Katsura with a suspicious look. Katsura lifts up her face when all of them get surprised.)

Haruhiko: Oh, I've thought you're a warrior.

Yashaoh: Oh, Katsura.

Kaede: Ah, -is.

Haruhiko: What happened?

Katsura: I'll tell you. When the Lord was taking a bath, the rebels from Kamakura suddenly made an attack on the temple. Our own troops were small in numbers, but fought bravely with the enemy. Woman as I was, I wore this mask so as to let the enemy take me for the Lord and went down to the garden with a halberd under the dim light of the moon. I called myself Sakingo Yorie when the enemy mistook me for the Lord and ran after me.

Yashaoh: Well, you mean to say that you misled the enemy by this mask and came here, cutting your way through the enemy, I suppose. (takes up the mask stained with blood and looks closely at it)

Haruhiko: We've mistook you for a warrior, so it's no wonder that the enemy should have been misled by you.

Kaede: But now you're in such a plight, Sis. I hope you will not die. (clings to Katsura and weeps)

Katsura: Well, I'm not sorry to die. Since I ^{was given} ~~became~~ the Shohgun's waiting-maid and was granted the title of Lady Wakasa, my cherished desire has been realized, so I'm quite willing to die. (seems to be out of breath when Haruhiko and Kaede nurse her. Meanwhile, Yashaoh still gazes at the mask with no word. Just then the priest of the Chuzenji Temple, wearing a surplice over his head, comes out running.)

Priest: How horrible! Please let me hide myself. (rushes into the house and gets surprised at Katsura) Oh, Katsura Dono, you're also wounded.

Katsura: What about the Lord?

Priest: I'm sorry to say that he died unhappily in action.

Katsura: Ah? (rises to her feet with difficulty and looks closely at the priest)

Priest: Not only the Lord but also most of his followers have died in battle. As for me, I've had a hairbreadth escape and managed to come here.

Haruhiko: Then your efforts to let the Lord escape have come to naught, I'm afraid.

Kaede: I'm sorry he is no more. (Katsura gets disappointed and falls again when Kaede clings to her and cries)

Kaede: Say, Sis. Cheer up, cheer up! (To Yashaoh)
Say, Father, she is dying, you know.

(Thereupon Yashaoh who has been looking closely at the mask up to now comes to himself.)

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